Existing Condition - Scenery

The Green Horse area of interest is located approximately ten miles east of the community of Lowell, Idaho. The analysis area is found within the Bitterroot Mountains in an area of rolling uplands. The Selway River is found to the north of the project area and the South Fork of the Clearwater is found to the south. Both of these river corridors are popular destinations for visitors pursuing a number of recreation opportunities. The project area is surrounded by roadless areas including the O'Hara – Falls Creek area to the north and west, the Lick Point area to the south, and to the south and east of the project area the West Meadow Roadless Area.

Figure 1 - View looking west toward the rolling uplands dividing the Selway and South Fork of the Clearwater Rivers.   Past harvest from the 1990s is evident in the foreground, middleground and background views.

Further to the west the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Area stretches from the edge of the West Meadow Creek Roadless area to the Montana border.

The Greenhorse project area is vegetated mostly with mixed conifers with some isolated areas of deciduous vegetation generally found in riparian areas. The vegetation patterns and river courses within the project area are commonly found in the upland areas found adjacent to the Selway River and have few distinctive areas of vegetation, water features, or landforms.

Figure 2 – Looking south from the American River – Selway Road 443 toward the Selway River Canyon. Dead and dying vegetation is commonly found in this area. .

Recreation users visiting the Greenhorse project area participate in mostly dispersed camping pursuits including dispersed camping trail use, berry-picking, equestrian use, hunting, and driving for pleasure. The Greenhorse area forms the scenic backdrop of the visitor's recreational activities and the scenic quality from the roads and. The Boundary Ridge Road 464 and the American River – Selway Road 443 are access routes that are popular for recreation visitor use and are considered to have a moderate concern for scenery (Concern Level 2).   Other roads and trails in the area have some use, but are not considered sensitive travel corridors.

Figure 3 – Much of the vegetation along both Road 443 and 464 are experiencing insect and disease activity.

There is evidence of extensive past harvest activities within the area of interest, including a number of openings that were created in the 1980s and 1990s. Most of these areas in the central portion of the analysis area have new vegetation filling the openings. Some of these past harvest
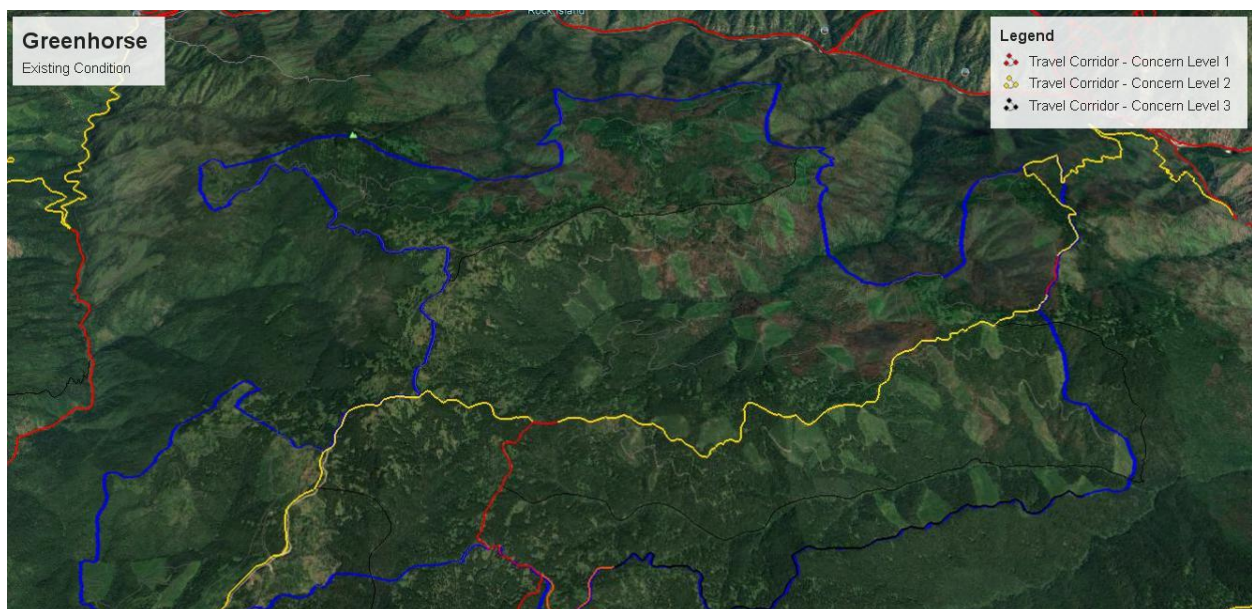

Figure 4 - Most of the openings were created in the 1980s and 1990s and have young stands of timber that do not appear as openings in the foreground.

activities are still visible but have re-vegetated to the point that they often don't appear as distinctive openings.

While some openings are still evident, they do not tend to dominate the existing landscape character in the project area. These openings meet the VQOs for the area of *Partial Retention (light green)*, *Modification (tan),* and *Maximum Modification (pink)*. These openings are in various stages of regeneration but most would take at least 10 to 15 years to appear as only

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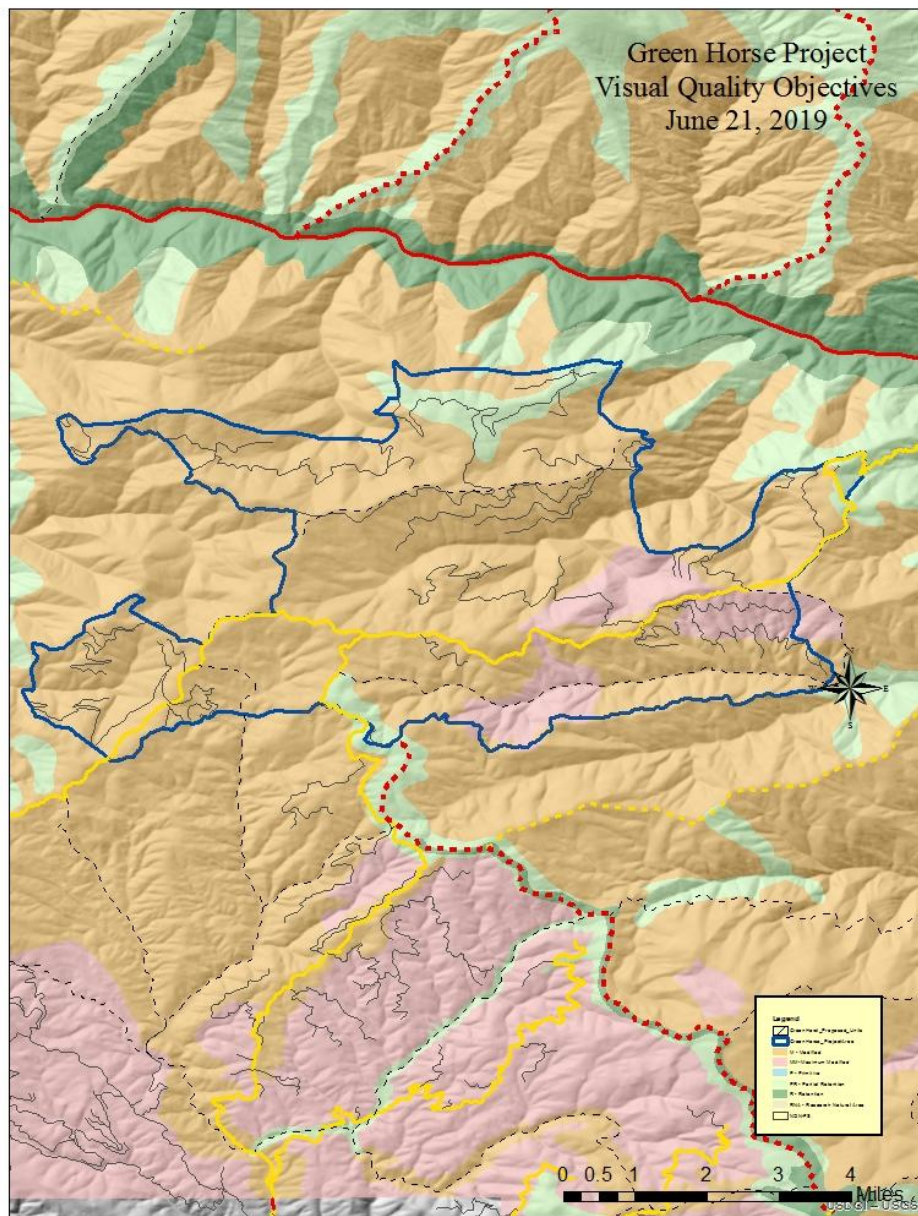
natural timber stands without man-made openings.

Design Features -
The following design feature will create openings that will meet the Visual Quality Objectives of *Modification* and *Maximum Modification* for proposed harvest areas within the project area.

- Within all viewsheds, created openings within treatment units should not be symmetrical in shape. Straight lines and right angles should be avoided. Created openings should resemble the size and shape of natural openings found in the surrounding natural landscape. Treatments should follow natural topographic breaks and changes in vegetation if possible.

Compliance with Forest Plan -

With design measures outlined above, the proposed harvest activities would meet the Adopted VQOs for the Greenhorse Project.